

Ser. No. 09/856,497 (GAU 3721)
Response to O.A. dated 8/19/03

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended): A medication filling apparatus comprising
a plurality of tablet cases for respectively accommodating medications of respective
types,
a plurality of hoppers each unitary and distinct from other ones of the hoppers, the
hoppers being disposed provided side by side below the respective tablet cases in a
corresponding manner and in alignment with respective ones of each of the tablet cases to receive
the medications dispensed therefrom, and
~~charging means for guiding~~ means for transferring the medications dispensed from a
dispensing port formed at the bottommost portion of each hopper to a predetermined container,
and ~~for charging them,~~
~~further comprising~~ retaining members on which the hoppers are hung, wherein the
hoppers are detachably installed onto the retaining members.

2. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The medication filling apparatus according to Claim 1, further
comprising hopper detecting means for detecting that the hoppers have been installed to the
retaining members.

3. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The medication filling apparatus according to Claim 1 or 2,
further comprising a height adjusting mechanism for adjusting the height of the dispensing port
of each hopper.

4. (currently amended): A medication filling apparatus comprising
a plurality of tablet cases for respectively accommodating medications of respective
types,

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a plurality of hoppers each unitary and distinct from other ones of the hoppers, the hoppers being disposed provided side by side below the respective tablet cases in a corresponding manner and in alignment with respective ones of each of the tablet cases to receive the medications dispensed therefrom, and

~~charging means for guiding~~ means for transferring the medications dispensed from a dispensing port formed at the bottommost portion of each hopper to a predetermined container, and ~~for charging them;~~

wherein each of the hoppers comprises a vertical wall installed in a standing manner to partition the interior thereof.

5. (currently amended): A medication filling apparatus comprising a plurality of tablet cases for respectively accommodating medications of respective types,

a plurality of hoppers each unitary and distinct from other ones of the hoppers, the hoppers being disposed provided side by side below the respective tablet cases in a corresponding manner and in alignment with respective ones of each of the tablet cases to receive the medications dispensed therefrom, and

~~charging means for guiding~~ means for transferring the medications dispensed from a dispensing port formed at the bottommost portion of each hopper to a predetermined container, and ~~for charging them;~~

wherein each of the hoppers ~~is provided with~~ comprises an anti-spilling wall that extends outward from the dispensing port and is installed over the full periphery of the dispensing port.

6-9. (canceled without prejudice)

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10. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The medication filling apparatus according to ~~Claim 1~~, wherein the claim 18, comprising a shutter driving means for opening and closing the shutters ~~[[is]]~~ disposed such that ~~[[it]]~~ the shutter driving means does not interfere with the rotating motion of the holding units by the rotation of the rotating plate and that it detachably engages with the shutter of the holding unit whose holding cell matches the charging means ~~[[.]]~~ for guiding the medications into the container.

11. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The medication filling apparatus according to ~~Claim 1 or 2~~, claim 10, further comprising shutter opening/closing detecting means for detecting the opening and closing of the shutters.

12. (new): The medicine filling apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the means for transferring the medications further comprises a charging means for guiding the medications into the container.

13. (new): The medicine filling apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the means for transferring the medications further comprises a holding unit further comprising a plurality of holding cells.

14. (new): The medicine filling apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the means for transferring the medications further comprises a charging means for guiding the medications into the container.

15. (new): The medicine filling apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the means for transferring the medications further comprises a holding unit further comprising a plurality of holding cells.

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16. (new): The medicine filling apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the means for transferring the medications further comprises a charging means for guiding the medications into the container.

17. (new): The medicine filling apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the means for transferring the medications further comprises a holding unit further comprising a plurality of holding cells.

18. (new): The medication filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the means for transferring the medications comprises:

dispensing ports respectively formed at the bottommost portions of the hoppers;

a plurality of holding units that are disposed below the hoppers on a rotating plate for rotating motion along a circumference where the dispensing ports of the hoppers exist, wherein each of the holding units respectively further comprises a holding cell and a shutter for opening and closing a lower end outlet of the holding cell;

wherein, when a medication is dispensed from a tablet case, the rotating motion brings a predetermined holding cell into alignment with the outlet of the hopper that receives the medication dispensed therefrom, and the holding cell is rotationally moved to align its outlet to the charging means for guiding the medications into the container before the shutter is opened.

19. (new): The medication filling apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of the hoppers is rectangular and wherein dispensing ports of the hoppers are deployed along a circumference of a circle.

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20. (new): The medication filling apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of the
hoppers is rectangular and wherein dispensing ports of the hoppers are deployed along a
circumference of a circle.

21. (new): The medication filling apparatus according to claim 5, wherein each of the
hoppers is rectangular and wherein dispensing ports of the hoppers are deployed along a
circumference of a circle.